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SUBJECT: Media Reaction to Ambassador Roos's Hiroshima Visit

¶1. Ambassador Roos's visit to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park with his family October 4 attracted wide coverage in the Japanese media. The national editions of the Mainichi and Yomiuri; the regional editions of the Asahi and Sankei; regional newspapers including the Sanyo Shimbun and Chugoku Shimbun; two national television networks, NHK and TBS; and four local TV stations all reported on the visit. Media outlets reported that in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park the Ambassador and his son laid a wreath at the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Memorial Monument and presented origami paper cranes at the Children's Peace Monument, after which they visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

¶2. The media noted that at the museum the Ambassador wrote in the visitors' book, "Hiroshima powerfully impresses on visitors the destructiveness of nuclear weapons. It makes us strongly feel the importance of seeking the peace and stability of a world without nuclear weapons." Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, who accompanied the Ambassador during a portion of the visit, asked the Ambassador to extend an invitation to President Obama to come to Hiroshima. The Ambassador reportedly responded, "I will convey my experiences in Hiroshima to the President." However, several newspapers noted that the President is unlikely to visit Hiroshima on his expected trip to Japan in November, because of his tight schedule and out of consideration for American sentiment.

¶3. Coverage of the Ambassador and his family's visit was uniformly favorable. The Mainichi, a left-of-center national daily occasionally critical of U.S. security policies, noted that although Ambassador Roos was the eighth U.S. Ambassador to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, it was rare for an ambassador to tour the museum unaccompanied by a guide. TBS, a national television network, commented that it was rare for an ambassador to visit Hiroshima less than two months after taking up his post. Hiroshima Mayor Akiba reportedly said he was moved by the empathy for the atomic-bomb victims shown by the Ambassador and his family.

ZUMWALT